



EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN AND THE ROLE OF TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

All children exhibit differences from one another in terms of their physical attributes (e.g., some are shorter, some are stronger) and learning abilities (e.g., some learn quickly and able to remember and use what they have learned in new situations; others need repeated practice and have difficulty maintaining and generating new knowledge and skills). The differences among most children are relatively small, enabling these children to benefit from the general education program. The physical attributes and/or learning abilities of some children, however—those called Exceptional Children—differ from norm (either below or above) to such an extent that they require an individualized program of special education and related services to fully benefit from education.

This paper is going to focus on causes and problems of exceptional children and role of teachers

KEY WORDS: Exceptional children, Physical attributes, Learning abilities, Individualized, Knowledge and Skills etc.

INTRODUCTION

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Crow and Crow says, The term exceptional is applied to trait or to the person possessing the trait if the extent of deviation from normal possession of the trait is so great that because of it the individual warrants or receives special attention from his fellows and his behaviour responses and activities are thereby affected. Thus it is clear that exceptional children possess more or less of a trait than that of the normal. Since he deviates from the normal in both the ends, as such is called exceptional or typical. Such children are not exceptional in a particular field but their exceptions are quite often related with several fields. Since exceptional children possess more or less of a trait they differ from the normal children in terms of possession of more or less of a combination of traits. Such children are called exceptional as either there is marked efficiency or remarkable performance in them.

BACKWARD CHILDREN:

In thin group of exceptional children, such children are included who when compared with their own age group children, show marked deficiency of traits. According to Barton Hall, "Backwardness in general is applied to cases where their educational achievement falls below the level of their natural abilities". Schonell puts Backward child is 'One who compared with other pupils of the same chronological age shows marked educational deficiency.'

Burt says, 'Backward child is one who in mid-school career is unable to do the work of the class next below which is normal for his age.'

The characteristics of backward child are as given below:

- Their learning speed is very slow.
- Their educational attainment is less than their physical and mental abilities.
- They are maladjusted.
- They fail to learn from the usual methods.
- They often feel depressed in life.
- They fail to take advantage of school curriculum.
- They have the tendency for anti-social activities.
- They suffer from mental ill-health.
- Their intelligence quotient measured by intelligence test reveals low intelligence.

CAUSES OF BACKWARDNESS :

Backwardness, indeed, is a personal problem. Several factors are found responsible for it. Some of them are as given below:

- Ill-health. Ill-health causes backwardness.
- Physiological defect in them leads to their backwardness.
- Physical disease. They either have innate disease or develop symptoms.

- Quarrel in the family lead to the development of backwardness among children.
- Lower intelligence quotient obtained from the test reveal that low intelligence is the cause of backwardness.
- Illiteracy among parents causes backwardness among children.
- Negative parental attitude also causes backwardness.
- Large size of the family is also responsible for backwardness among children.
- Lower economic status also causes backwardness in children.
- Bad habits of the parents are responsible for backwardness in children.

BACKWARD CHILDREN, IMMINENTLY, NEED THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

- **Provision of guidance:** There should be provision of guidance service in the teaching programmes of the backward children.
- **Provision of trained teachers:** There should be provision of trained teachers for the backward children in the education programme of the backward children.
- **Check-up and necessary treatment:** Regular check-up and necessary treatment should be provided in order to outgrow their physical and physiological problems.
- **Re-adjustment in homes and schools:** The backward children should be helped to re-adjust in schools and homes. Through sincere love, affection and sympathetic attitude they can be encouraged for the purpose.

GIFTED CHILDREN :

- The gifted child is also known as the 'super normal'. Such children possess more traits than that of a normal child. Harigurst has defined the gifted child as, 'One who shows consistently remarkable performance in any worthwhile line of endeavour.'
- Kolesnic says "The term gifted has been applied to every child who is in his age group is superior in some ability which make him an outstanding contributor to the welfare and quality of living in our society."
- Witty says, "Gifted children are those children whose performance in a worthwhile human endeavour is constantly remarkable and those who are academically superior."
- Terman and Oden writes, 'Gifted children rate for above the average in physique, social adjustment, personality traits, school achievement, play information and versatility of interests.'

THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS ARE FOUND IN THE GIFTED CHILDREN

- High I.Q. in intelligence tests.
- Superior in general knowledge.
- Remarkable success in learning.
- Novelty in work.
- Work efficiency
- Proof of in right
- Interest in abstract thinking
- Social firmness
- Curiosity to know through question-answer
- Maturity in emotional expression.
- Concentration to work.
- Confidence in performance.

PROBLEMS OF THE GIFTED CHILDREN :

- The main problem with which the gifted children confront is that of adjustment.
- The problems of gifted children centre around his needs. The basic needs of the gifted children include:
- Need for attainment of knowledge and understanding it.
- Need for creativity and research work.
- Need for proper development of specific ability and abilities.
- Need for self-expression.
- If the above mentioned needs are not met properly then the gifted child finds it difficult to get adjusted and maintain equilibrium. When he faces obstruction in the gratification of his needs, he becomes emotionally instable and upset.
- At times he does not get appreciation for his creative tendency and his research work. Then he feels insecure and gets only criticism.
- Sometimes when he is too much praised for nothing, he feels highly proud and haughty and starts ignoring people around him.
- Thus when his needs are not gratified properly and in absence of appropriate facilities, the gifted becomes a problem child for the teacher.
- Psychologists have defined giftedness in many ways. This is because giftedness is due to many talents and abilities. Kerk calls a child gifted if he is either socially talented, mechanically talented, artistically talented, musically talented, linguistically talented, academically talented.
- Thus it is clear that a gifted or talented child is one who shows consistently remarkable performance in any worthwhile line of endeavour. Those who show
- promise in creative writing, dramatic, mechanical skills, music and social leadership are also included under the group of gifted children.
- Some other group of psychologists opines that children possessing 10 of 140 or above are gifted children. Gifted children are the asset of a nation. He can best serve his society in many ways. All countries and cultures have a certain percentage of population who are gifted and can best serve their country in the promotion of art, science and culture.
- In case of India, the gifted children can bring about a drastic change in its structure and function. India, though poor is rich with its physical resources. It is they who can utilize the physical as well as natural resources in proper way. Kothari Commission (1964-66) has said that 'Destiny of India Is being shaped in her classrooms.'
- Education of gifted is an important problem to which teachers and administrators have to administer themselves. In India, there are more than 50 students in a class. Some are gifted, some are average and some are slow learners. That's why the teacher fails to take special care of the gifted.

• They are being frustrated and the school becomes a lifeless and colourless place for them. They do not like to come to school anymore. Thus there is a tremendous loss to the nation. Hence provision for the gifted has to be made carefully so that the gifted children do not feel frustrated.

• Kirk has put forth three ways to attend the problem of giftedness. One way is to organise special classes for them. (Grouping). The other way is to provide opportunities for accelerated promotion. The third way is enrichment in the regular grade.

ROLE OF TEACHERS IN EDUCATING EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

- The role of a teacher encompasses responsibilities that interconnect a wide range of disciplines. Teaching begins with education. Techniques and strategies develop and evolve through the use of sociology and psychology, differing with each unique child. As a future teacher, your goal is to make a difference in the life of every child that you are privileged to have the opportunity to educate.
- All children are rightfully afforded the same opportunity for education, regardless of any disability they may have. Educating a child means being aware of their abilities and reflecting upon their educational development and the best possible way of achieving that. Parental involvement is vitally important as well as the collaboration of all educational, emotional and behavioral areas of the student.
- As a teacher you must be an activist and a facilitator for the child's best interest and educational opportunity. Be educated and informed to utilize all tools available to create the best possible learning environment for each child and be motivated and passionate so that your teaching is meaningful, flexible and in tune to all your students educational needs.
- The term learning applies not only to education, but is equally important in terms of social, emotional and behavioral areas as well. By accepting the challenge of educating exceptional students, you will not only help them to develop their minds in terms of education, you will help them develop tools for overcoming difficulties in all areas of disability.
- Evaluations of student abilities and disabilities will be based on a non-discriminate basis and you must be conscientious of each student's unique individual circumstance.
- Address a child's learning disability with knowledge and strategy. Accommodate different disabilities by implementing IEP's specifically and individually designed to meet each student's education goals and actively pursue the means necessary to obtain the appropriate education for each child in the area of specialized assistance.
- Teach inclusively to the extent that is feasible. Encourage social interaction between all students and develop teaching methods that incorporate inclusion methods. Be aware of a student's need for specialized individual education and work to provide the greatest balance between them.
- Protect confidentiality rights of special education students. Be respectful of their emotional needs and of their privacy. Encourage all parental involvement and actively seek their permission when a disability requires individualized education.
- Convey your observations, evaluations and insight to parents, students and other special education professionals in an effort to facilitate a beneficial learning environment for all students that you teach. Success is greater achieved with collaboration than individually.

CONCLUSION :

At the conclusion it may say that all children differ from one another in individual characteristics along a continuum; exceptional children differ markedly from the norm so that an individually designed program of instruction- in other words, special education is required if they are to benefit fully from education. It is a mistake to think that there are two distinct kinds of children – those who are exceptional and those who are regular. Exceptional children are more like other children then they are different. Nevertheless, an exceptional child thus differs in important ways from his peers without disabilities. And whether and how we recognize and response to those differences will have a major impact on the child's success in school and beyond.

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